

DECLARATION

In the matter of U.S. Patent Application Ser.
No. 09/785,509 in the name of Kazuhiro
KAWABATA

I, Mariko ENDO, of Kyowa Patent and Law Office, 2-3, Marunouchi
3-Chome, Chiyoda-Ku, Tokyo-To, Japan, declare and say:

that I am thoroughly conversant with both the Japanese and English
languages; and,

that the attached document represents a true English translation of
Japanese Patent Application No. 2000-42656 filed on February 21, 2000.

I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge
are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be
true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful
false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or
both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such
willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any
patent issued thereon.

Dated: October 27, 2005

Mariko ENDO

PATENT OFFICE
JAPANESE GOVERNMENT

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Applicant(s): DAI NIPPON PRINTING CO., LTD.

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[Title of Invention] PERSONAL IMAGE INFORMATION RECORDING/OUTPUTTING
SYSTEM AND PRINTED MATTER

[Claims]

[Claim 1]

A personal image information recording/outputting system consisting of:
a reading means for reading photographic image data shot with a digital camera
and saved in a data storage medium from the data storage medium,
a means for an advertiser to provide and register the advertisement image data
to the advertisement image server, and
a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means,
wherein, the photographic image data and advertisement image data are laid out on a
predetermined format, and the advertisement image data are updated periodically and
output.

[Claim 2]

A personal image information recording/outputting system of claim 1, wherein
said reading means for reading the medium and a photographic image data and advertisement
image data outputting means are provided in a server of a store.

[Claim 3]

A personal image information recording/outputting system of claim 2 comprising
multiple store servers, wherein a store server and advertisement server are connected to
each other via the network, and photographic image data and advertisement image data
can be output at any given stores.

[Claim 4]

A personal image information recording/outputting system of claim 1, wherein
a fee paying means is provided, and photographic image data and advertisement image
data are output after the fee paying processing is executed by the fee paying means.

[Claim 5]

A printed matter of photographic image data and advertisement image data shot with a digital camera being laid out and outputted in accordance with a predetermined format, wherein the advertisement image data are updated periodically.

[Detailed description of the invention]

[0001]

[Field of the invention]

The present invention relates generally to a system for handling personal image information such as facial photographic images. More specifically, the invention relates to a personal image information recording/outputting system for outputting personal image information serving as digital image data to a recording medium such as a printed matter, a direct mail, a CD-ROM or an MO, etc. via a network such as Internet, and printed matters obtained by the system.

[0002]

[Description of Related Background Art]

Personal image information such as a facial photographic image is incorporated as digital photographic image data into a personal computer by means of a digital camera, a scanner or the like to be personally outputted as a printed matter of a full-color photographic image by means of a printer adopting a thermal transfer recording system or an ink jet recording system.

As described in Japanese Patent Laid-Open Publication No. 11-203360, there is also known a service by special traders for managing user's digital photographic image data on a network such as Internet and for accepting an order for a photographic development/print on the network.

[0003]

[Problems to be resolved by the invention]

As described above, the printed matters of photographic images are often obtained on the basis of digital image data. However, the cost of purchasing finally available printed matters is too high to widely utilize the printed matters in the world.

Moreover, in recent years, information services outputting a so-called multimedia for handling information, such as images, voices, characters and various types of data, via a network such as the Internet or via an optional communication medium are actively carried out. Among these services, the information such as advertisements and promotions for various business enterprises and organizations has been put to practical use, and their information contents are increasing.

However, such advertisement information is mainly viewed on a monitor or listened from a speaker. In either case, the information is instantaneously observed, and there are not many cases where the information can permanently stored. Even if the information can be outputted as full-color printed matters, there is a problem in that the cost of obtaining such printed matters is very high.

[0004]

Therefore, the present invention has been made in view of the above-described problems and is capable of inexpensively acquiring an output matter of digital image data such as a facial photographic image and permanently storing advertisement information as an output matter via a network such as the Internet.

[0005]

[Means of solving the problems]

In order to solve the problems shown above, the present invention provides a personal image information recording/outputting system consisting of a reading means for reading photographic image data shot with a digital camera and saved in a data storage medium from the data storage medium, a means for an advertiser to provide and register the advertisement image data to the advertisement image server, and a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means, wherein, the said photographic image data and advertisement image data are laid out on a predetermined format, and the advertisement image data are updated periodically and output. The photographic image data and advertisement image data are laid out in a predetermined format, and the advertisement image data are updated periodically and output.

In addition, the above-mentioned reading means for reading the medium and a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means are provided in a

server of a store.

[0006]

The system has multiple store servers. A store server and advertisement server are connected to each other via the network, and photographic image data and advertisement image data can be output at any given stores.

A fee paying means is provided, and photographic image data and advertisement image data are output after the fee paying means is executed.

A printed matter made of the photographic image data and advertisement image data shot with a digital camera being laid out and outputted in accordance with a predetermined format where the advertisement image data are updated periodically.

[0007]

[Effect]

The present invention provides a personal image information recording/outputting system consisting of a reading means for reading photographic image data shot with a digital camera and saved in a data storage medium from the data storage medium, a means for an advertiser to provide and register the advertisement image data to the advertisement image server, and a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means. The photographic image data and advertisement image data are laid out in a predetermined format, and the advertisement image data are updated periodically and output.

Therefore, since it is herein premised that the advertisement image data, which have been registered with the advertisement rate paid by the advertiser, together with the photographic image data, are laid out in a format of an output matter as an output object of a digital image such as a facial portrait, it is possible to subtract the advertisement rate from the charge for a printed matter where only the photographic image data are simply recorded, so that it is possible to acquire the printed matter at a low charge.

[0008]

[Embodiments]

The embodiments of the recording/utilizing system of personal image information according to the present invention will now be explained in details referring

to the drawings.

Fig. 1 is a schematic view of an embodiment of the recording/outputting system 1 of personal image information according to the present invention.

A store server 7 has a media reading means 2 that reads out photographic image data 9 which have been picked up by means of a digital camera to be stored in data storage media and an outputting means 4 of the photographic image data and advertisement image data. Likewise, a store server 13 installed in another area likewise has a media reading means 11 that reads photographic image data 15 and an outputting means 12 of the photographic image data and advertisement image data.

[0009]

The media reading means 2, 11 are designed to read photographic image data (i.e., digital data) which have been picked up by means of a digital camera to be stored in data storage media such as smart media, CF (compact flash) cards, PC cards, floppy discs, MOs (magneto-optical discs), CD-Rs (compact disc-recordable) and the like. Each media reading means has drives for reading, writing and storing the respective media so as to correspond to the kinds and image formats of the data storage media. Furthermore, the photographic image reading means for reading the photographic image data from the data storage media may include a scanner for reading digital image data from a silver salt photograph which is an analog photograph, and an apparatus for reading a digital image directly from a digital camera, which is installed in the store, to transfer the read digital image of photographic image data directly to the outputting means.

[0010]

As the output means 4 and 12 for photographic image data and advertisement image data, a digital printer for preparing a full-color printed matter (hard copy) of the photographic image data may be used. Specifically, a digital printer adopting a thermal transfer recording system such as a sublimation transfer recording system or a thermal melting recording system, or a digital printer adopting an ink jet recording system may be used. However, a digital printer adopting a sublimation transfer recording system is preferably used since it is possible to form a high quality image equal to a full-color silver salt photographic image.

Furthermore, the output parts not only prepare the printed matters of the photographic image data and advertisement image data but also include a drive for writing the image data in a data storage medium such as a smart medium.

[0011]

The advertisement image data providing/registering means 3 shown in Fig. 1 is designed to provide and register the advertisement image data 10, which are intended to be given wide publicity by an advertiser, in the advertisement server 5. At that time, the advertiser discusses and decides conditions on an advertisement appearing period, an advertisement appearing frequency, an advertisement rate and so forth to make a contract with a company (organization) for managing the advertisement server. For example, the contents of the contract include the advertisement appearing period is 2 months, a required advertisement image is laid out to be outputted on one of ten printed matters when the total number of the outputs of the advertisement image data using one printer reaches 10, and the advertisement rate are paid at a rate of 20 yen every one printed matter, on which the advertisement image is laid out to be outputted, and the total amounts of the outputs are paid.

The advertisement server has a selection management program to save and accumulate the advertisement image data and to select an advertisement image from the saved and registered advertisement image data in a predetermined method.

[0012]

With regard to the important point of the system of the present invention, for example, if the conditions include that the advertisement image data are updated every, e.g., 2 months, the next advertisement image data to be provided are selected to update the last advertisement image data to the new advertisement image data two month after the advertisement image data are output for the first time. For that purpose, it is required to register and save the advertisement image data to be updated in the advertisement server beforehand.

By thus periodically updating the advertisement image data, it is possible to timely provide current advertisement information for users. This is of advantage to both of the advertiser and users.

[0013]

Examples of a layout of photographic and advertisement images on a predetermined format, that is, examples of the placement of respective data are shown in Figs 4 through 8. Figs. 4 and 5 show examples where the whole photographic image is vertical and an advertisement image is laid out below or on the side of a photographic image serving as a main portion. In both of the examples of Figs. 4 and 5, the viewed directions of the photographic image and advertisement image are the same, so that both images can be correctly viewed.

Figs. 6 and 7 show examples where the whole photographic image is horizontal and an advertisement image is laid out on the side of or below a photographic image. In both of the examples of Figs. 6 and 7, the viewed directions of the photographic image and advertisement image are the same, so that both images can be correctly viewed.

Fig. 8 shows an example where four scenes of photographic images are allocated to one printed matter and an advertisement image is laid out in a region between the respective photographic images. In the example of Fig. 8, the advertisement image is shown by characters "ABC", but it should not be limited thereto. The advertisement image may be an optional image such as a photographic image. However, in the advertisement image having this placement, an advertisement image having a light color tone is preferably provided in order to facilitate the observation of the photographic images.

[0014]

When the photographic image(s) and the advertisement image are laid out (placed) on the printed matter, the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the images are preferably suitably reduced or enlarged so that the images are included in the printed matter in a normal state so as not to cut the edges of the images at the assigned positions. However, the reduction and enlargement ratios of the vertical and horizontal dimensions are preferably adjusted so as to prevent the original images from changing.

In the placement of the photographic image and the advertisement image as shown in Figs. 4 through 7, the printed matter may be perforated so as to be cut at the boundary between the photographic image and the advertisement image.

[0015]

While the system 1 shown in Fig. 1 has been installed in two areas, the number of store servers and installed areas should not be limited thereto, but a large number of store servers may be used. All of these store servers can be connected to the advertisement server 5 via the network 6 and the system can be used by stores (points) that are distant from the advertisement server.

Furthermore, the network 6 means a network mainly including Internet or the like, and includes all of communication media having a transmission speed sufficient to transfer photographic image data and so forth, such as dedicated lines, CATV networks, dial-up connection networks and LANs.

[0016]

Fig. 2 is a schematic view of another embodiment of the personal image information recording/outputting system 1 according to the present invention. A store server 7 has a media reading means 2 for reading photographic image data 9 shot with a digital camera and saved in a data storage medium and a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means 4. In addition, the store server 7 has a fee paying means 8. After a hundred-yen coin or the like is thrown into a fee paying opening of the fee paying part to execute the fee paying processing, the output means 4 to output the photographic image data and advertisement image data can be used.

[0017]

At first, an advertiser decides conditions on an advertisement appearing period, an advertisement appearing frequency, an advertisement rate and so forth to make a contract with a company (organization) for managing the advertisement server. For example, the contents of the contract include the advertisement appearing period is 2 months, a required advertisement image is laid out to be outputted on one of ten printed matters when the total number of the outputs of the advertisement image data using one printer reaches 10, and the advertisement rate are paid at a rate of 20 yen every one printed matter, on which the advertisement image is laid out to be outputted, and the total amounts of the outputs are paid. In addition, it is premised that ten or more advertisers are obtained.

[0018]

Since it is herein premised that the advertisement image data, which have been registered by paying the advertisement rate by the advertiser, together with the photographic image data, are recorded, it is possible to subtract the advertisement rate from the charge for a printed matter where only the photographic image data are simply recorded, so that it is possible to acquire the printed matter at a low charge. For example, a printed matter conventionally provided at a charge of 500 yen a piece can be provided at a charge of 300 yen a piece with the application of the system according to the present invention.

[0019]

The store server 13 in another area is provided with a media reading means 11, fee paying means 14 and a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means 12. While the system 1 shown in Fig. 2 has been installed in two areas, the number of store servers and installed areas should not be limited thereto, but a large number of store servers may be used. All of these store servers can be connected to the advertisement server 5 via the network 6 and the system can be used by stores that are distant from the advertisement server.

The store server shown above is provided with a media reading means, fee paying means and a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means. The store server also contains internally a program to manage a series of flow to attach the media to a disk, read photographic image data, layout photographic image data and advertisement image data in a predetermined format, request fee payments, and then, to output the data on printed matter, save the data on media.

[0020]

The system of the present invention can classify the personal data of shot photographic data and the personal data can be saved or stored in a specific server, etc. For example, such personal data include a fixed coding system for electing a distinction between one or more persons and animals and plants about an object(s), sexuality, date and so forth from a predetermined hierarchy, furthermore, if the classification of personal information using such a fixed coding system leaves something to be desired, a system for directly inputting keywords characterizing personal information may be used.

[0021]

Furthermore, as the personal data more accurately identifying a person, such as a full name, age (a personal age, not the assignment of a range such as date) and the position in a family make-up (the first-born son, the first-born daughter, grandchild, etc.), may be inputted as variable codes. Thus, the center server can have a so-called album managing function of collectively managing photographic images of the person and/or members of the person's family. Specifically, for example, if the first-born son "Dainippon Ichiro" is identified, all of the photographic images of "Dainippon Ichiro" can be retrieved and extracted, and if necessary, all of the photographic images in his primary school days can be edited to be outputted as an index print so that a plurality of, e.g., 36, photographic images are laid out on a single printed matter at a scale of 1 to 36.

[0022]

It is also possible to provide a service based on the above-described personal data wherein the calculation of the age(s) of the person and the confirmation of an engagement, a wedding and so forth are carried out in accordance with the increase of the age(s) of the person, e.g., in accordance with commemoration at the turning points in the person, such as a birth, a festival for children of three, five and seven years of age, entrance into a kindergarten, entrance into a primary school, entrance into a junior high school, entrance into a high school, entrance into a university, a coming-of-age ceremony, entrance into employment, an engagement, a wedding ceremony and a birth, and a direct mail is dispatched every turning point or a printed matter having a cabinet size is sent every birth day to the person and/or members of the person's family from an advertiser.

Further, in the present invention, it is possible to use software that associates personal data with advertisement image data so that the advertisement image data by an advertiser is output in combination with the photographic image data corresponding to the characteristics of the personal data shown above when outputting the photographic image data.

[0023]

Fig. 3 is a flow chart for showing a processing in the personal image information recording/outputting system. First, photographic image data are prepared as digital images

taken by a digital camera (step n1).

The photographic image data thus prepared are often stored in the data storage media.

Then, the photographic image data thus stored in the data storage media are read from a drive (step n2).

Meanwhile, the advertisement image data that an advertiser wants to advertise to the public are provided and registered in an advertisement server (step n3).

[0024]

Thereafter, one advertisement image datum is selected by a predetermined method from a plurality of advertisement image data which have been stored by a plurality of advertisers (step n4).

Specifically, for example, specific advertisement image data may be selected at a predetermined frequency so that a required advertisement image is laid out to be outputted on one of ten printed matters when the total number of the outputs of the advertisement image data using one printer reaches 10, or specific advertisement image data of an advertiser closely related to babies, such as a paper diaper manufacturer, a baby food manufacturer or a baby clothing manufacturer, may be selected when the object of the photographic image data is a baby.

[0025]

Then, the photographic image data obtained at step n2 and the advertisement image data obtained at step n4 are laid out in accordance with a predetermined format to layout both of the photographic image data and the advertisement image data on an output matter (step n5).

Thereafter, a fee is paid for the output matter of the photographic image data and data saving on the storage media (step n6).

Furthermore, since the advertisement image data are registered, selected and output in the step n3 and n4, so that the fee required above is a low set fee.

Finally, after the fee paying step 6, the photographic image data are output to form printed matters or the image data are saved in a data storage medium (step n7).

[0026]

The description of the flowchart of the system show above is about the processing when preparing the photographic data at first. If the photographic image data are read, saved and accumulated in an appropriate server, the family members or friends can perform the same flow of conduct by inputting a password or an identification code to read the photographic image data from the server.

[0027]

[Effect of the invention]

The present invention is a personal image information recording/outputting system consisting of a reading means for reading photographic image data shot with a digital camera and saved in a data storage medium from the data storage medium, a means for an advertiser to provide and register the advertisement image data to the advertisement image server, and a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means. The photographic image data and advertisement image data are laid out in a predetermined format, and the advertisement image data are updated periodically and output.

Therefore, it is possible to subtract the advertisement rate from the charge for a printed matter where only the photographic image data are simply recorded and to acquire the printed matter at a lower charge than conventional printed matters as the advertisement image data that the advertiser registered by paying the advertisement rate are laid out on the output matter in the format of the said output matter, which is an output of a digital image such as a facial portrait.

[0028]

In addition, the printed matter obtained by the system of the present invention is the advertisement image data and photographic image data output and laid out on a predetermined format. The fee of outputting printed matter is lower than the conventional matter. The advertisement image data are the newest information updated periodically. User can not only enjoy the photographic image data, but the user can also hold the current, appropriate advertisement information. Therefore, the system is very useful.

[Brief descriptions of the drawings]

[Fig. 1]

A schematic diagram showing an embodiment of a personal image information recording/outputting system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 2]

A schematic diagram showing another embodiment of a personal image information recording/outputting system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 3]

A flow chart for explaining the flow of a processing which is carried out in a personal image information recording/outputting system according to the present invention.

[Fig. 4]

A schematic diagram showing an example of a layout of photographic and advertisement image data.

[Fig. 5]

A schematic diagram showing an example of a layout of photographic and advertisement image data.

[Fig. 6]

A schematic diagram showing an example of a layout of photographic and advertisement image data.

[Fig. 7]

A schematic diagram showing an example of a layout of photographic and advertisement image data.

[Fig. 8]

A schematic diagram showing an example of a layout of photographic and advertisement image data.

[Description of reference characters in the drawings]

- 1 Personal image information recording/outputting system
- 2, 11 Media reading means
- 3 Advertisement image data providing/registering means

4, 12 Photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means

5 Advertisement server

6 Network

7, 13 Store server

8, 14 Fee paying means

9, 15 Photographic image data

10 Advertisement image data

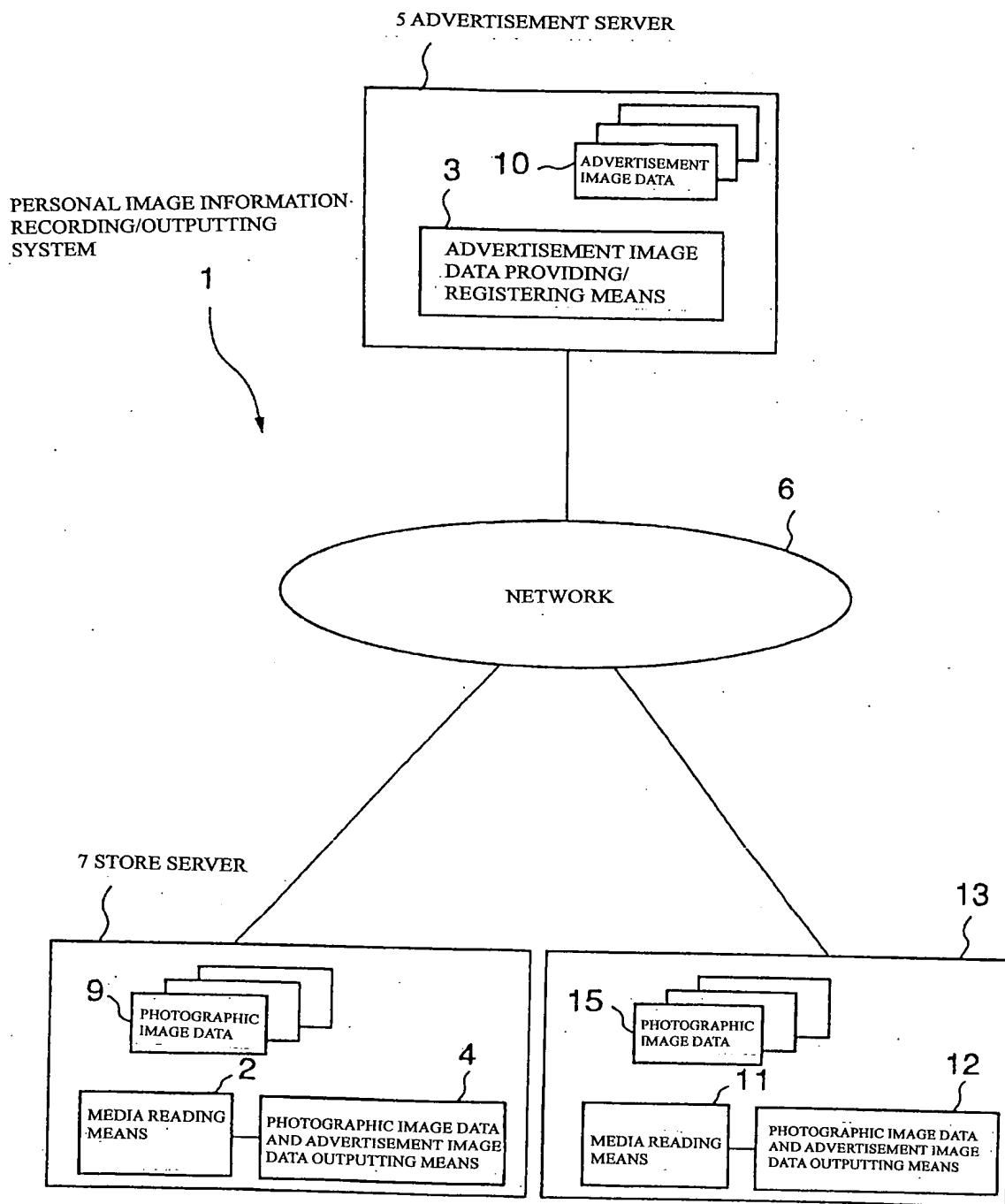


Fig. 1

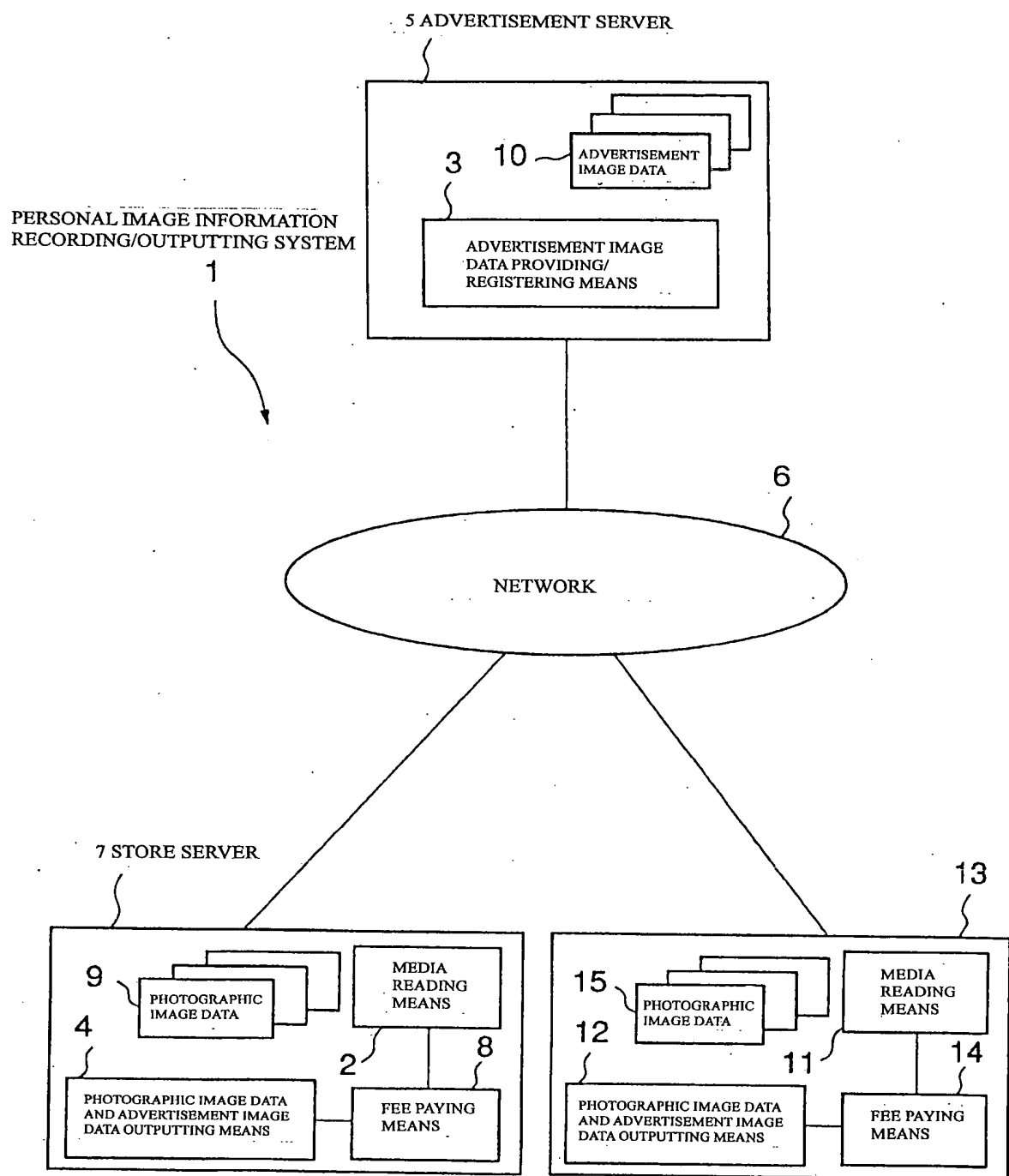


Fig. 2

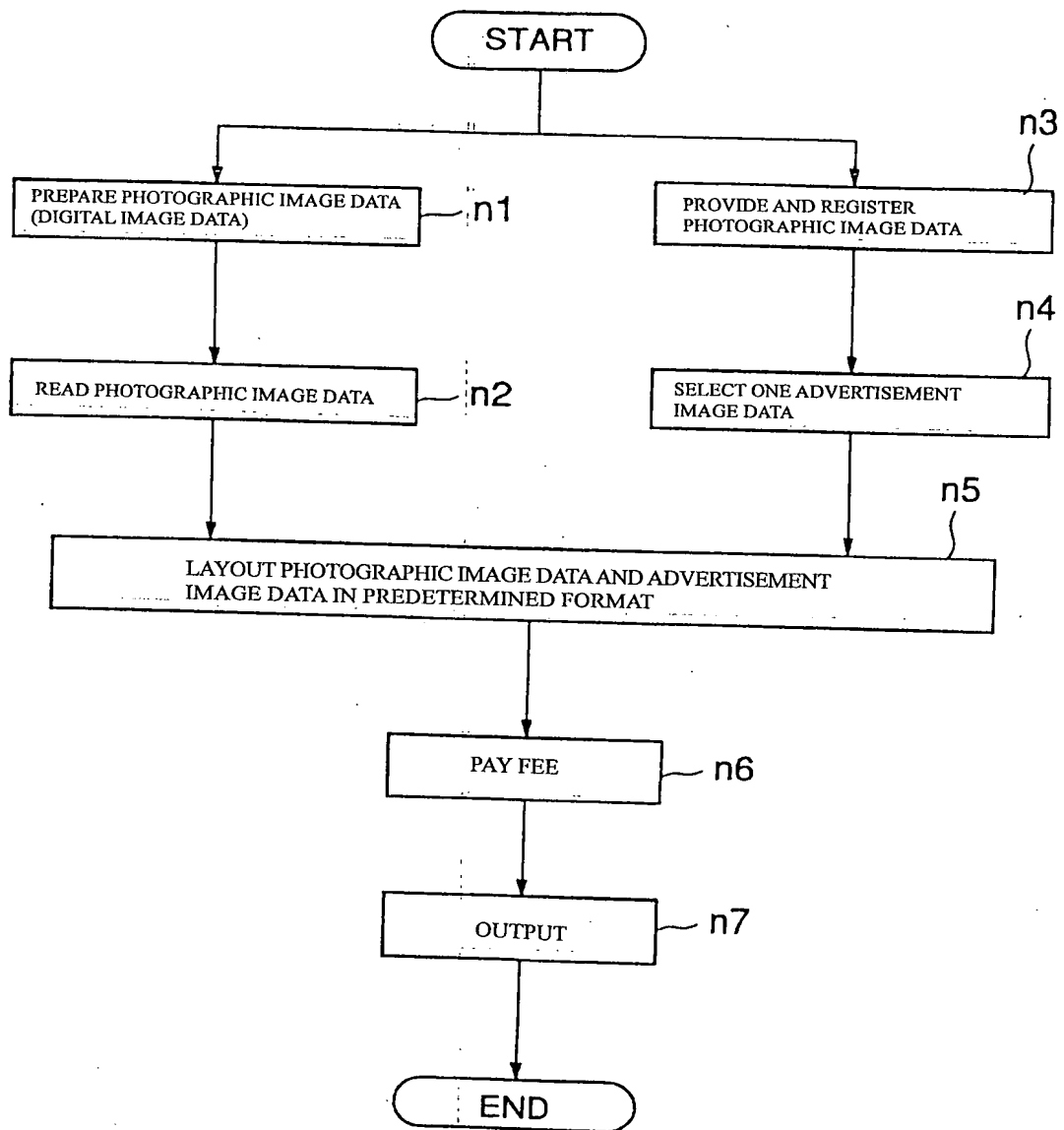


Fig. 3

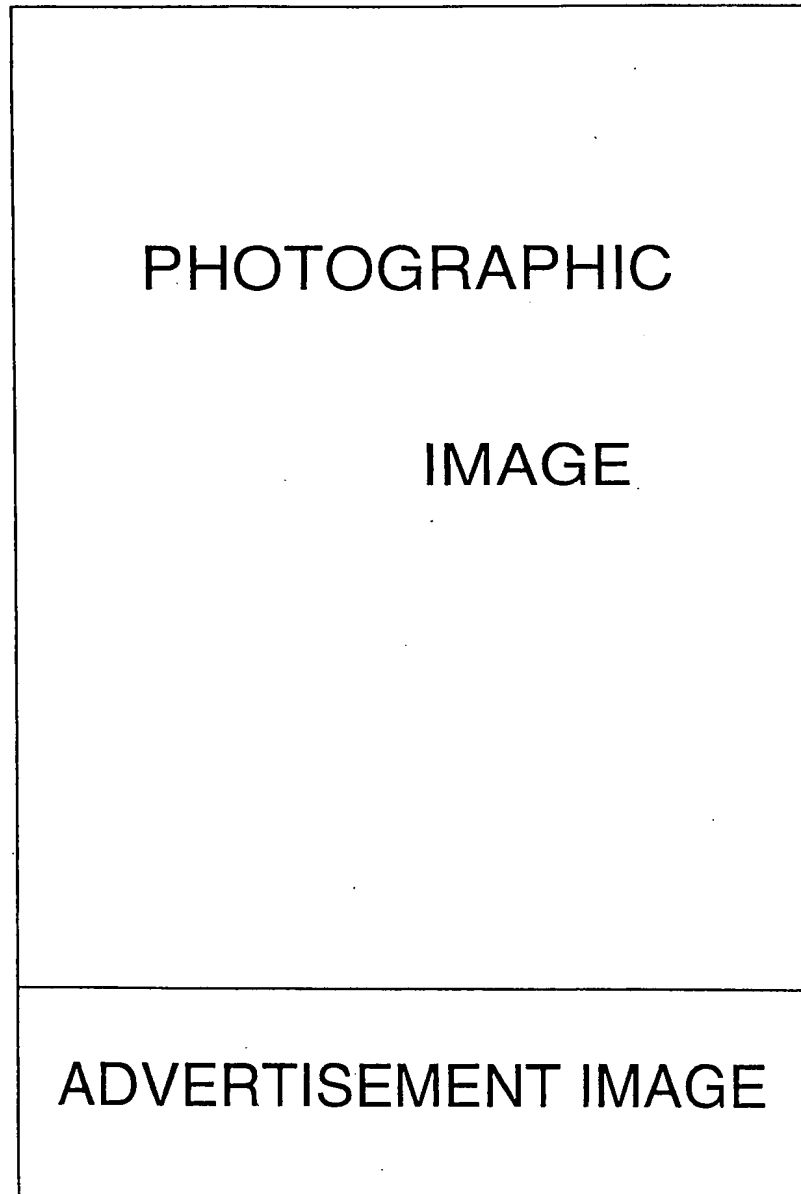


Fig. 4

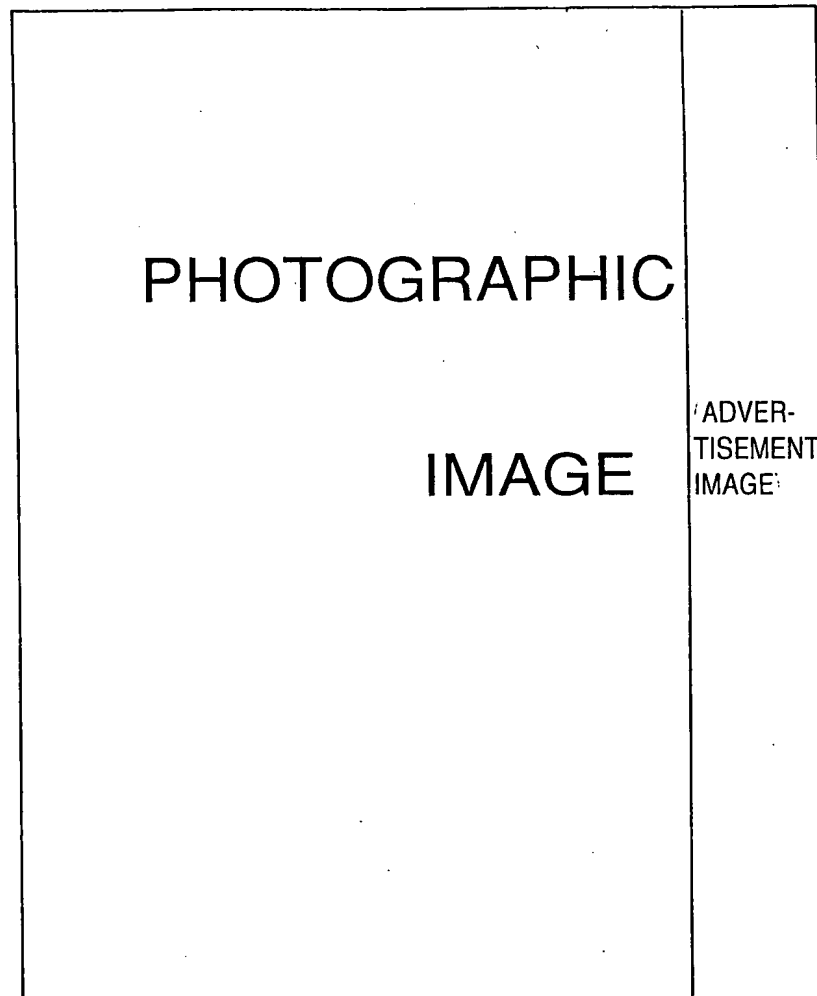


Fig. 5

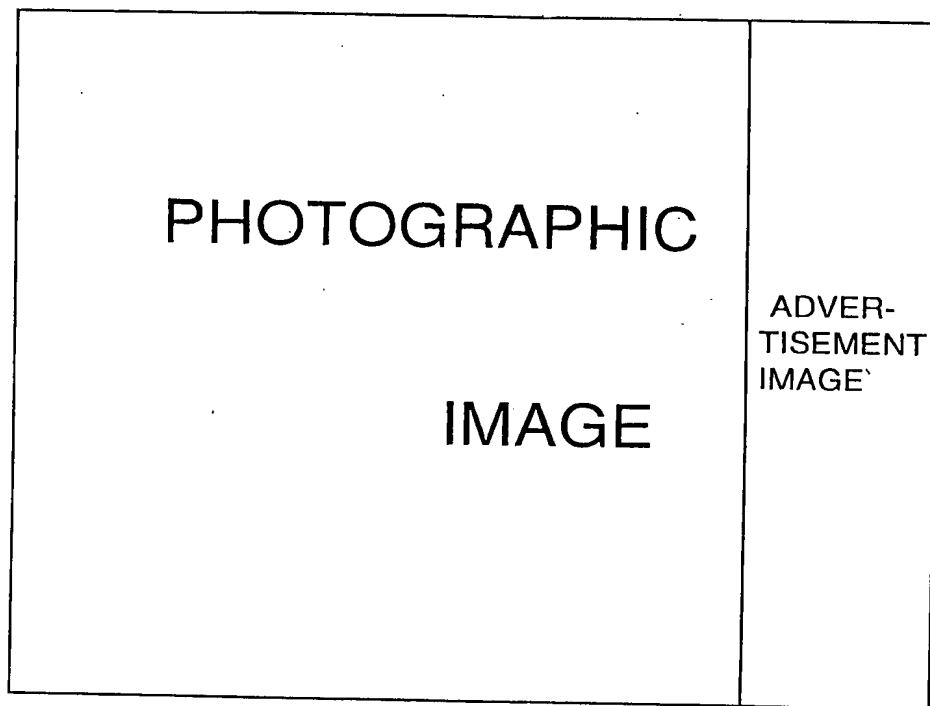


Fig. 6

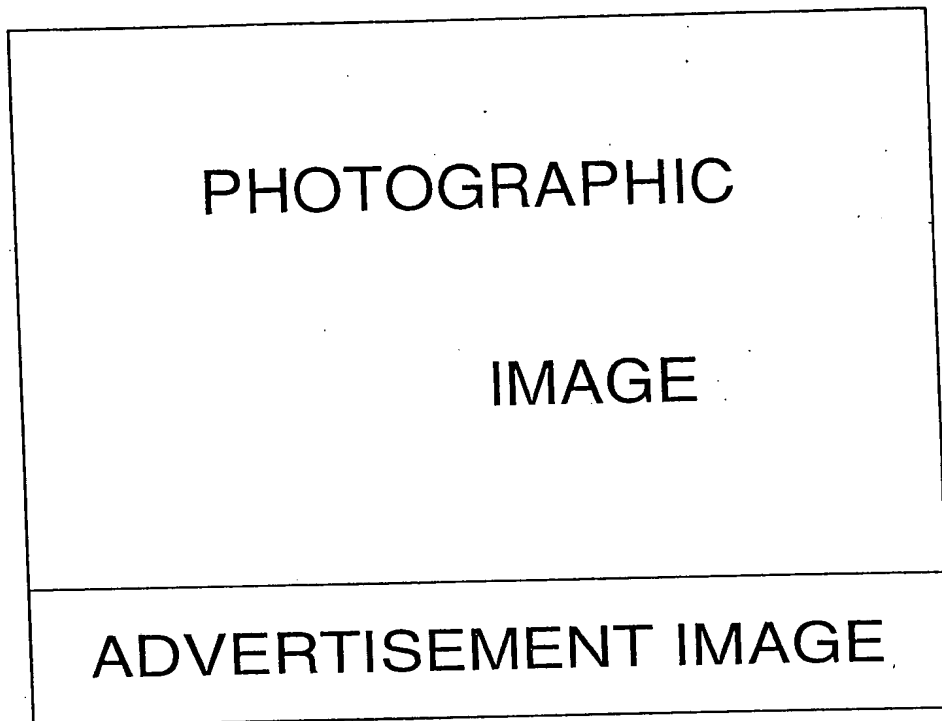


Fig. 7

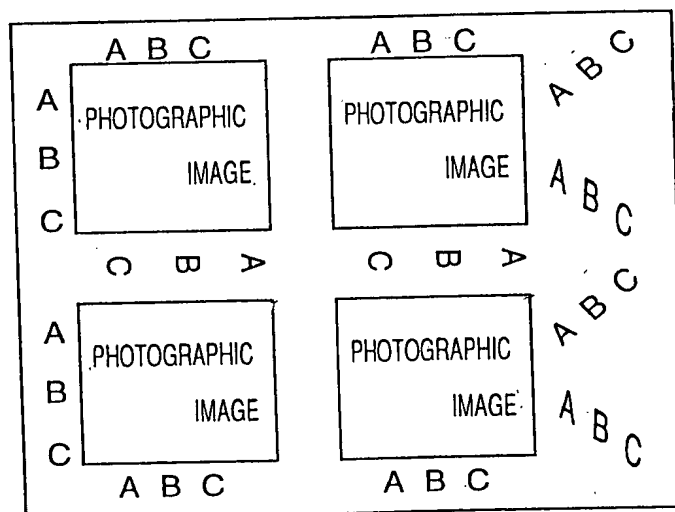


Fig. 8



[Document Type] Abstract of the disclosure

[Abstract]

[Object]

To provide a personal image information recording/outputting system and a printed matter thereby obtained, which are capable of inexpensively acquiring an output matter of digital image data such as a facial photographic image and permanently storing advertisement information as an output matter via a network.

[Means for Solving the Problems]

A personal image information recording/outputting system consisting of a reading means for reading photographic image data shot with a digital camera and saved in a data storage medium from the data storage medium, a means for an advertiser to provide and register the advertisement image data to the advertisement image server, and a photographic image data and advertisement image data outputting means. The photographic image data and advertisement image data are laid out in a predetermined format, and the advertisement image data are updated periodically and output. Therefore, it is possible to subtract the advertisement rate from the charge for a printed matter where only the photographic image data are simply recorded, so that it is possible to acquire the printed matter at a lower charge than conventional printed matters.

[Representative drawing]

Fig. 1